



The old telephone exchange



Combe Down's early telephone exchange became news in March when its owner, the New Christian Church, applied for planning permission to demolish it and build on the site. The Society decided that it would not corporately object to this because we have not set ourselves up as a 'civic society' but many members and many other local residents objected. Permission was refused, mainly because it is in a Conservation Area and considered to be of architectural merit. We have put together a brief history and description of the Exchange which is on sale and available at meetings and from the Secretary.

Lottery grant



Our lottery 'AwardsForAll' grant of £2,800 towards our Outreach Project for communicating with members and others has paid for the scanning of several hundred 35mm slides, collected by the late Peter Addison, author of 'Around Combe Down'. Many

other photographs, mainly those of Ian Barclay who has recorded street features and which make a valuable record of the changing scene, are also being scanned. This enables their use in publications and for digital projection.

Dates for your diary

All indoor meetings are held at the Combe Down Junior School in Summer Lane, 7.00 for 7.30pm.

Wed 20 June

Roger Ransome, bat expert for the mines project, 'The Bats of Combe Down' postponed from April, Combe Down Junior School, Summer Lane, 7.00 for 7.30pm.

Tue 10 July

Excursion to the Claverton Pump. Travel by *Jubilee*, the traditional canal boat (licensed bar--hot and cold drinks--bar nibbles--modern toilet--ample parking). Leave Brassknocker Basin at 6.30; full details on booking. The Pump will be working for us and we may see part of an old crane being restored. Provisional cost £10.50 per person.

Thur 27 Sept

Excursion to the Butcombe Brewery at Wroughton. A coach has been organised for this excursion leaving at 5.45pm. and a pickup point is being arranged. Provisional cost £8 per person.

These excursions are open to members and guests on a first come, first serve basis. Apply soon, enclosing your remittance, to the secretary at 13 Williamstowe, BA2 5EJ. Any enquiries to m.aylett@homecall.co.uk or 01225 833681.

Further ahead

A programme for the autumn is being produced and meetings on 17 October and 21 November will include a talk by Nick McCamley, author of several books on the stone mines, and the launch of the Society's new publication, 'I remember Tucking Mill' by Stanley Wicks.

On Wednesday 12 December there will a 'Grand Heritage Quiz Night' at the Hadley Arms. There will also be a Jewish Burial Ground Open Day and Combe Down Guided Walks.

Reflections on industrial archaeology

Sir Neil Cossons OBE, Chairman of English Heritage, chose this as the title of a talk which he gave in Bath this April celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society of which he was a founder member.

The 1860s, he said, was a time when scores of local antiquary societies were set up and it was an age when industry flourished, incomes were high and increasing, and the public traveled widely, usually by train, to see the new museums. He then made a direct comparison with the 1960s, a period similarly characterised, when Harold Wilson spoke of the 'white heat of technology', though this time travel was by car, when again visits to heritage sites expanded. But that was a time when Britain's heavy industries were fast closing down. We are now in an age when only the older generation have memories of the pit head, the shipyard and the factory gate.

The major challenge for those of us wanting to preserve these memories is that whereas in the 1860s, artefacts could be displayed on a small scale, the large industrial artefacts are liable to be seen as 'big, black and boring'!

Sir Neil illustrated his thesis with fascinating slides from the 1950s to the present day showing the scope of the problem which must be faced. Bristol has done well in some respects (conversion of the Bush warehouse of 1837 into the Arnolfini Gallery and the initiation of the SS Great Britain project are prime examples) but in others the Council exhibits, he believed, 'parochialism to Olympic standards'! Heritage not wholly that of Bristol is liable to go unfunded. He hopes that one of the next British bids to UNESCO for World Heritage Site recognition might be a large part of the Great Western Railway, shorter but more important, he thinks, than the Great Wall of China.

Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society, one of the organisations listed on the back page, has always been especially supportive of our work for which we are grateful. It is an old established sister organisation and its reports, compiled by Owen Ward who is on their Committee and also one of our members, mention not only the stone mines but also DeMontalt Mill, Kingham quarries, Tucking Mill and the old telephone exchange.

Exhibition

The Society has contributed to 'Bath in particular', an exhibition at the Museum of Bath at Work in Julian Road which has an official opening on 4 July.

Introducing our contribution, we say: 'Combe Down village is shaped by the stone quarries, above and below ground (worked 1730-c.1830). The ring of open quarries had entrances in the stone face leading to a honeycomb of passages and caverns, currently being stabilised by in-filling with foamed concrete from a works site on Firs Field, our 'village green'. A web of packhorse tracks and footpaths called 'drungs' crisscross the village. The main east-west road looks northwards over Bath city and south over lush valleys towards Salisbury Plain. The village embraced the Admiralty during World War II and is now a well-mixed residential area of Bath.'

We have given the Museum photographs of a typical drung, a view of the underground quarries and the current worksite on Firs Field.

Record your memories

Janet Read (janet@rral.co.uk tel 830957) is undertaking an Oral History project, and writes:

'The purpose of this project is to record the memories of long term Combe Down residents for the benefit of future research. These memories are of great value as they provide a way of recording a way of life that has long since gone.

I have taken over making the recordings for this project and the first few sessions have recently taken place. Already many interesting memories of school days and wartime have surfaced along with the real sense of community that existed in the past. There is also a feeling for how things have changed over the years.

A number of people volunteered themselves to be part of the Oral History project when they took part in the Shops Workshop and I hope to be in touch with them in the next few weeks or months. Sessions usually last about an hour and I am very willing to come to your home to make the recording or arrange an alternative venue if you prefer.

It is important that as many people as possible contribute their memories so please get in touch with me if you have lived in Combe Down for most of your life or when you were younger.'

Jewish Burial Ground update



Progress on the plans of the Society and the 'Friends' of Bath's only such site remains slow but at a recent visit from an influential member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, there is a possibility that the ownership problem might be solved. This would then enable us to apply for funding to set in motion a major restoration programme with a view to future regular opening times and educational use. Meanwhile, further documentation of the tombstone inscriptions continues. Society members who join 'The Friends' are kept in touch with developments and receive Newsletters (subscription £3 a year; the treasurer is Norman Marks, Tanglewood Lodge, Corston, BA2 9BA). Brochures giving an outline of the site from the Secretary.

Who's who

We are producing a 'Tombstone Guide' of the Jewish Burial Ground which will give information on the lives of many of those buried there. This will be published in collaboration with the 'Friends' of the site

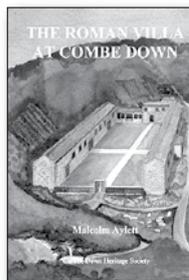
Are you a member?

Combe Down Stone Mines Community Association which continues to watch the interests of householders during the stabilisation Scheme, and

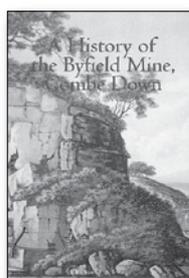
Friends of Firs Field which has a remit to represent the community in the restoration of the field on completion of stabilisation.

Membership of both organisations is free and further information is available at the Stone Mines Information Centre which is open on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.

Publications



A History of the Byfield Mine by Dick Irving, £9.95.



The Roman Villa at Combe Down by Dr Malcolm Aylett, £4.95.

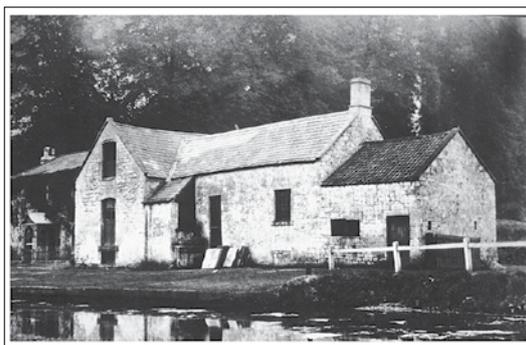
Heritage Trail leaflet, 50p

Combe Down Past and Present. A CD of pictures from old postcards and recent photos taken from the same spot.

Geraldine Simmonds has attractive hand made cards for sale (01225 840953)

All publications are available at Society meetings or from the Secretary, m.aylett@homecall.co.uk or 01225 833681.

Remembering Tucking Mill



A major forthcoming publication will be 'I Remember Tucking Mill'.

These are the memoirs of Stanley Wicks who was born in 1910. Together with illustrations and routes of walks around Tucking Mill, it is at present being put together by Rosemary.

Production has been assisted by grants from the Lottery Awards for All and the Bath Council.

Other organisations

Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society
Gill Sheppard, 10 Teewell Hill, Staple Hill BS16
5PA, gsandg.sheppard@btopenworld.com

Widcombe and Lyncombe History Study
Group welcomes non-members to its meetings
at 7.30pm usually on Thursdays. For further
information and to join, contact Margaret
Burrows on 480749 or Fay Briddon on 310127.

Bathwick Local History Society
Meets on the second Monday of each month and
welcomes non-members.
Contact Sheila Edwards on 463902 or 460389.

South Stoke Local History Group
Welcomes new members.
Contact Sylvia Williams on 832921.

Weston Local History Society
Welcomes visitors and charges £1 for non-
members at their monthly lectures. Membership
is £5 or £8.50 a couple. Contact Prue Brice on
315342, 6 Westwood Gardens, Weston BA1 4EJ.

The Bath & Cammerton Archaeological Society
Active in many areas around Bath. Tel 761026.

Saltford Brass Mill 0117 986 2216

Bath Preservation Trust
1 Royal Crescent, Bath BA1 2LR. 01225 338727
e admin@bptrust.org.uk - museums at No 1, the
Building of Bath Museum, Beckford's Tower and
the Herschel Museum.

Bath Records Office, Guildhall, 477421
Friends of the Survey of Bath & District, 01373
834396

Avon Industrial Buildings Trust 01228 477612

Bradford on Avon Museum Trust
M Wilkins, Mosel Cott, Wine St Terrace, Wilts
BA15 1NP

Contacts

Chair Rosemary Simmons 833301
rosyprint@care4free.net

Secretary (and of the Friends of the Jewish
Burial Ground) Malcolm Aylett 833681, 13
Williamstowe, BA2 5EJ m.aylett@homecall.co.uk

Subscriptions please

Annual subscriptions (for the 12 months to
end of March 2008) are now due. Membership
subscriptions for this year are overdue so if
you haven't renewed yet please do so – NOW.
Otherwise we feel we must make this your last
Newsletter

We need your email!

If you received this newsletter by post it means
we have not your email address. Please email it to
m.aylett@homecall.co.uk with a cc to j_briggs@
tiscali.co.uk

Membership application

If you are already a member, there is no need to fill this in - simply send your payment to Jane Briggs (see below)

First name

Surname

I apply to become a member of the Combe Down Heritage Society until 31 March 2008
and I agree to my details being held on computer for the duration of my membership

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Please tick membership option required

Standard £3 Student £1 Family £7

I am sending an additional £ as a donation to the society

Total amount enclosed

Ages of children
(if family membership)

If you pay Income tax (PAYE) please sign here so we can reclaim
the tax

Signed

Date

Cheques (payable to 'Combe Down Heritage Society') or cash may be left at the Stone Mines Information Centre or sent to the
Membership Secretary, Jane Briggs, Longridge, Summer Lane, Combe Down. Do not put cash through the post.

Please note any interests or skills you have which might be relevant the Society